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# NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW.

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ART. I. — *The Life of Haydn, in a Series of Letters written at Vienna ; followed by the Life of Mozart, with Observations on Metastasio, and on the Present State of Music in France and Italy.* Translated from the French of L. A. C. BOMBET, with Notes by WILLIAM GARDINER, Author of "The Music of Nature." Boston : J. H. Wilkins and R. B. Carter. 1839. 16mo. pp. 389.

WHEN this title-page first met our eye, we were pleased with the thought, that a new book, or at least a book with new notes, had appeared, upon the lives of these Fathers of Music. We hailed it as a happy omen, that the public mind was turning back to those undefiled wells, to the principles of a pure taste ; and that, amidst the dazzle and glitter of an artificial and exaggerated style, the beauties of these great composers were again beginning to be appreciated. In this expectation we have been disappointed.

There is nothing new in the volume but the title-page, and the preface of the American publishers. The original "Letters" by Bombet were written between the years 1808 and 1814. These were soon after translated into English, and published with notes, by the author of the "Sacred Melodies," William Gardiner. A reprint of the work was issued in Providence, Rhode Island, by Miller and Hutch-

ens, and Samuel Avery, in 1820. Since that time, the author of the Notes marked "G.," has become a favorite from his "Music of Nature," published in 1832, and his name is therefore given in the title-page of the new reprint, as more likely to render the work attractive.

But, although the work contains nothing which has not been before the public for more than twenty years in England, and nearly as long in America, we feel indebted to the publishers for the reprint of 1839. The original work is interesting; it contains much information, and much pleasant discussion; it is written *con amore* by a hearty admirer of Haydn and Mozart, and one apparently capable of appreciating their merits. No one, who has any love for music, can fail to be interested by the lively remarks and the pleasant style of the French writer. And as for the notes, by Gardiner, we agree with the writer quoted in the new preface, that, "here he has shown some of his finest powers of description." The work is worthy of a place in the libraries of intelligent men, and Messrs. Wilkins and Carter have published it in becoming style. Their volume would not disgrace the fastidious centre-table, or the fancy book-case; whereas the old Providence edition was very shabby, and fit only to be thrown into a rubbish closet, with departed spelling-books, and the mortal remains of dictionaries, grammars, and geographies.

Moreover, it is a good book to be presented to a community, among whom music is, comparatively, but just transplanted. Musical taste, in this country, is yet to be formed. We have nothing like national music, because we have nothing like national taste. We have not even a decided preference for any particular style. We like the music of Haydn, or of Handel; but we do not find, that it is more congenial to our fancy than that of Rossini, or Bellini. We do not decide in favor of Italian music over that of Germany, or of French music over that of Scotland. On the whole, perhaps, the simple Scottish airs are the most generally relished in America. But the preference is not decided enough in favor of any class or style of music, to indicate that there is here, as in France, Spain, Italy, Germany, Wales, Ireland, and Scotland, a distinctly marked national taste.

The inquiry is interesting, whether such a taste is the gift of nature, or rather a result of cultivation. If it be the

growth of time or civilization, why is there no national music of England ? Why, on the contrary, is the music of Scotland so distinctly marked ? What influences have been in operation in the latter country to produce this effect, which have been wanting in England ? Are such influences ever to act in America ? Are we to have a national music, or are we, with all our wealth, luxury, and refinements, to be as destitute of music as England ?

Were it not for the unfortunate instance of our mother country, we should say, unhesitatingly, that wherever there is poetry, there must be music. If a nation has traditionary ballads, if the spirit of poetry has ever made a tabernacle in the heart of a people, it seems impossible that music should not be invoked to give it expression. Wherever there is human nature, music should be found. May it not be, that England is an exception to the common law of national taste ; and that, but for certain peculiar circumstances, we should now be enjoying the music of that country, as well as of other civilized lands ?

It is obvious, that although climate and scenery may affect the character of a national music, they can neither cause nor prevent its growth. In a clear and elastic atmosphere and a genial climate, the voice is generally more flexible and clear than in a cold and damp region. This would perhaps have an effect upon the music of such a country during its gradual formation. Italy is called "the land of song" ; not probably because the Italians are a more musical people than the Germans, for instance, but because the voice is more generally good, and consequently there is more vocal music in Italy. No traveller can fail to be impressed with the appropriateness of the appellation. This difference would lead us to expect, what we find to be the case, on comparing the Italian with the German music. The former is more simple, more distinguished by melody, more passionate. The latter is profound, complicated, metaphysical, often more grand and sentimental. The former, from its simplicity, indicates that it is the music of the voice ; the latter, by its rich and compound harmony, appears to be the result of instruments combined

Natural scenery may also exert an influence on the character of a nation's music. It is difficult to imagine the same music to be the growth of the sunny plains of Lombardy,

and of the awful scenery of the Alps, or the wild shores of the northern seas. Whatever influences are exerted upon national character by these differences, must become apparent in music, if the nation has any. And although we have no faith in the theory, that music is merely the result of man's imitative propensities, we have at the same time no doubt, that it is in a degree modified in every country by the prevalent sounds. For instance ; in a land of tempests, where the mournful sigh of the coming storm, or the roar of its fury, and the deep, angry, and incessant roll of the ocean are constantly heard, we should expect to find corresponding tones in the music. But a milder region, where the song of birds and the busy hum of insects is continually heard, where the prevalent sounds of nature, the breeze, the purling stream, the cataract, are of a cheerful character, and where, from the gentleness of the scenery, even the storm is robbed of half its terrors, we should suppose that the music would partake of this character. And this we believe will be acknowledged to be the case, as far as experience goes.

But such influences as these can never create a national music. The climate of England is as well fitted to make musicians as that of Scotland or Germany, and the scenery is as lovely as that of Italy. What, then, prevents that fine country from having her own music ? Many reasons may be assigned. In the first place, England has been cut off from the inheritance of her earliest music. Her earliest race, when they retired to the mountains of Wales, carried with them their language and song. Those strains, however wild and uncouth, which their bards poured out, would, if they had continued to be heard in England, to be listened to, revered, cherished, and repeated from age to age, have become gradually more and more polished and harmonious, while at the same time they would have been as strongly stamped with individual character as the music of any nation now is. The outpouring of the heart in song, the expression, in this form, of national character, the strains which nerved the rude warrior's arm, or which were thundered forth by victorious bands, would never have been lost ; but, even at this day, we should have heard strains, which perhaps struck terror into the hearts of Julius Cæsar's troops, or which resounded through the mysterious groves of the Druids.

It is thus that a national music is formed. The strains

which are poured forth from an enthusiastic people, which really give utterance to popular emotion, are its first origin, and give it an indelible stamp. This enthusiastic outpouring of song generally happens only in the infancy and rudeness of nations, while superstition blinds and mystifies, while the passions are vehement and uncontrolled, and the poetry of life is untamed. The same causes which make a rude age poetical, would also give birth to music. The progress of the national music is afterwards analogous to that of the language. It is softened, improved, polished ; but it remains essentially the same. The features which were derived from the deep sources of national character are never changed. The early airs are repeated from age to age, and others are fashioned from them, bearing the same distinctive character. Thus it has been with Scotland, with Ireland, and with Wales.

The first race with which England was peopled retired before the invader, and a new people, with another language, other customs, and other characteristics, took possession of the soil. These too undoubtedly had their music, as well as their language and their poetry. And, had the Saxons continued to be the people of England, their music might perhaps at this day have been prominent in the fine arts.

But the Saxons were invaded and conquered ; and where did a conquered people ever preserve their song ? “ They sat down by the rivers of Babylon and wept ; ” they hung their harps upon the willows, and their sound was heard no more.

The Norman came with his romances and his minstrels. But the song of the minstrel was of earlier times, and of heroes long gone by. The language he spoke was soon modified, varied, and finally changed ; and the two nations, the conqueror and the vanquished, became blended like their languages, till the original characteristics of both were confused and almost lost. With the growth of the English language, came an age of reality. The poetry of life was fast fading away. The time when national music is born had gone by in England, and the song of earlier days was lost.

Thus England was deprived of her traditional music. Other circumstances, adverse to the growth of music as a creation of art, may be traced in her history. We speak of music as a creation of art, in contradistinction to the music which is handed down from a rude age, and whose origin is lost in antiquity. Among a highly endowed and enlightened

people, music, as an art, may spring up at any time. Wherever there is a strong taste for it generally diffused throughout a community, composers will be sure to appear. Wherever a nation is peculiarly excited by powerful sentiment, this feeling is likely to burst forth in song. Thus, for instance, the Marseilles Hymn may be considered a genuine offspring of national enthusiasm.

Let us briefly compare the musical history of England with that of Italy. In the former, as we have seen, the traditional music was lost. In the latter it was in some degree, at least, preserved; and was inherited, perhaps, from the remotest antiquity. For many centuries music in Italy was only preserved by the Christian church, having been solemnly proscribed at Rome after the death of the Emperor Nero. The airs of ancient Rome, inherited perhaps from the Etrurians, the Oscans, or the Greeks, were chanted by the early Christians at their secret devotions, and were preserved by their enthusiasm and piety, when they could no longer be heard in the stately abodes of the senators. And this ancient music, it is believed, has never been lost, the Gregorian chant being nothing more nor less than the classical music of Rome. Thus, although music was almost extinct for a long period, it never perished; and when, after almost disappearing from even the church, it was revived by Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, and improved by Pope Gregory during the fifth century, Italy then was in possession of her traditional music.

But the art owes its perfection in Italy to the efforts of the church. An institution which depends so much upon affecting the senses of its devotees, would not of course omit to use so powerful a means as music. And accordingly we find, that both the oratorio and the opera owe their existence to the efforts of churchmen to promote a spirit of devotion in their followers. The earliest form of the spiritual drama was presented by the Christian Pilgrims, who, on their return from the Holy Land, used to accompany their dramatic representations of the life and sufferings of our Saviour and of the Apostles, with songs and choruses descriptive of the same. About the middle of the sixteenth century, Philip of Neri established regular oratorios in Florence, with the declared object of calling the public attention to religious subjects. The sacred opera had already assumed a more com-

plete form than the representation of the Pilgrims. A religious drama had been performed at Padua in the thirteenth century ; and it appears, that the "Annunciation" was enacted every year at the city of Treves.

From sacred to profane subjects the step was easy. Politian produced a musical drama on the story of Orpheus, in the latter part of the fifteenth century, and thus the opera was established.

It was the good fortune of Italy, that a refined state of living, — wealth, luxury, and elegance, and with them elevated and refined tastes, — were acquired before the enthusiasm and devotion, which mark a ruder condition of society, had departed. The church still continued to direct the taste, and to influence the heart, long after the rough features of barbarism had disappeared from Italy ; and the church, as we have seen, took music under its peculiar patronage. Music, like the other fine arts in Italy, was the offspring of enthusiasm and a romantic spirit, united with civilization, refinement, and wealth.

The case was entirely different in England. We have seen, that the revived music of Italy was founded on the traditional airs of the country. Had these been lost, the music might now have been of a very different character. In England there was no such foundation to build upon. In Italy the growth of music was owing to the efforts of the church. But all such influences were almost lost in England. The Romish church never exerted the influence on the arts in that country that it did in Italy, because its power was lost before England became refined enough to take pleasure in the fine arts. While Giotto was painting the walls of the Campo Santo at Pisa, and Lorenzo Ghiberti was casting his gates of Paradise for the old Lombard church in Florence, the English were industriously occupied in cutting their own throats and the throats of their neighbours. The Reformation came ; and with it a severe spirit, which looked with aversion upon outward forms and ceremonies, and all the magnificent paraphernalia of the Church of Rome. Many of the decorations were removed from the churches, many of the forms were interdicted, and the splendor of worship was much diminished. Little or no encouragement was given to the arts by the Church of England down to the time of Charles the First. Then the spirit of Puritanism began to breathe its sternness



over the land, and its effects were to retard the growth of the fine arts in England more than a century. In the midst of all these changes, that enthusiastic spirit which gives birth to art was lost. The fervor of the Puritans, had their doctrines allowed it, might have originated a new and impressive music, which succeeding refinement would, perhaps, have improved to rival the music of Germany or Italy. But, unfortunately, all such accomplishments and exercises were denounced, and the barbarous twanging hymns of the Puritans had no other effect, than to destroy even the little taste for the art previously existing in England.

The writer of a very interesting article on the piano-forte, in a late number of the "*Westminster Review*," would make it appear, that music continued to flourish during the Commonwealth in England. In proof of this, he quotes the celebrated passage from Milton's "*Tractate on Education*," written while the author was Latin Secretary to Cromwell, in which he recommends the learning of music as a part of the regular training of young men. We can go further than this. Whitlocke informs us, that an opera was actually published in 1658, by Sir John Davenant. But we do not think either of these circumstances proves, that music was in a flourishing condition at the time. Milton was remarkably distinguished from the Puritans of his day. He excelled in courtly and chivalrous accomplishments; his learning was profound, and his spirit was deeply imbued with romance. We might as well quote Milton to prove, that all elegant arts and acquirements were cultivated and respected, as that music was preserved. It is well known, that, in the preliminaries to the treaty of Uxbridge, it was positively insisted upon, that all play-houses should be utterly interdicted for ever. Here was, of course, a death-blow to the opera. Davenant published his opera, notwithstanding this law; but it appears to have been a dangerous experiment. We find, at any rate, that he had fallen into such odium with the government, that his life was only saved through the intercession of Milton.

At all events, the writer of the article just quoted agrees with us, that music almost disappeared from England after the time of James the Second. He says,

"The mass of our diaries, correspondences, and periodicals, of the eighteenth century, if consulted, will serve to show,

that while fashion still condescended to take music under the shadow of her goose-wings, and the middle classes, therefore, must needs ape the ecstasies of aristocrats, until the very grange of the farmer was polluted by the modish presence of the 'spinnet' of Miss Betty or Miss Molly ; the old spirit, which made our Bacons not deem the secrets of the art unworthy of honorable allusion, our Brownes include it among the objects of subtile speculation, our Evelyns condescend to read from the musician's pages, in turn with those of the poet and philosopher, had as utterly passed away as the delicious and racy language of the ancient drama, or the sweet superstition of the Fairies."

We have endeavoured to give a few of the more obvious reasons for the non-existence of English music, because we like to account for this want from external causes, rather than from a deficiency in the national capacities. We do believe, that, but for unfortunate influences, there might have been a musical literature peculiarly English ; but, at the same time, we are forced to the conviction, that there is not in England so keen and delicate a perception of art, generally speaking, as in many other countries.

For many centuries the romance of life has been but little known in England. Even in the brilliant reign of Elizabeth, it was confined to a comparatively insignificant number. True, the accomplished Surrey went abroad proclaiming the charms of his fair Geraldine with spear and sword ; Sidney realized in his own person the ideal virtue and courage of the heroes of the round table ; Raleigh, and Essex, and Hatton, and many a noble knight beside, preserved the golden age of chivalry round the throne of their mistress. But, beyond the magic circle of the court, the romance of life ceased. It found no home among the people. There was nothing of that wild and poetical existence, which, for a hundred and fifty years afterwards, was found in the Highlands of Scotland.

But it may be said, there was as much of the romance of life in England as in Italy, from the time of the Medici downwards. This may be true, and yet nothing can offer a greater contrast than life in these two countries. We do not refer merely to the style of living, the manners and customs, the degree of comfort, and the amount of external conveniences ; but to the spirit of society, the objects of life, the callings of men, the most important and absorbing interests. In England, life

is business. Its objects are, improvements in the accommodations of existence ; the means of keeping out the cold and wet ; commerce, manufactures, voyages of discovery ; and, above all, the absorbing game of politics, whether in the forum or the battle-field. These are the great and serious objects of Englishmen. Accomplishments, arts, amusements are the mere ornaments of life, but little prized, and never brought into comparison with the other weighty matters.

In Italy, the case is very different. There, life is art. The weighty occupations, the important business, the concerns of states, and the interests of governments, are art. Cities are more proud of their statues and their pictures, than of their convenient streets and their ingenious by-laws. States boast more of their artists, than of their internal improvements. And this admiration of the fine arts is not confined to the wealthy and refined. It pervades all classes, and becomes the high interest and the pride of all. Italy is, in truth, the *republic of art*. Music, sculpture, poetry, painting, are not there the exclusive property and privilege of any class. They belong to all. They are claimed and enjoyed by all. A few remarks of Bombet's, where he is speaking of the inutility of transferring the objects of art from Italy to France, are in accordance with what we have just remarked. He tells us, that, at Milan, we hear of Titian's "Christ crowned with Thorns," as soon as we arrive. At Bologna, the street valet will direct your attention to the St. Cecilia of Raphael. "At Rome," he continues, "the person best known, and in highest estimation, is Canova ;" "at Rome they will talk for a fortnight of the manner in which the fresco of the convent of San Nilo, painted by Domenichino, is going to be transferred to canvass. At Rome it is the great artist who occupies the public attention ; at Paris, it is the successful general, or the favorite minister, — Marshal Saxe, or M. de Calonne."

These differences between England and Italy arise, rather, we apprehend, from the natural superiority of the latter country, than from any adventitious circumstances. The Italians have a keener sense of art than the English. Music is the native growth of the country ; it is universally understood, loved, and practised. In England it is an exotic ; of slow growth, and fit only for the saloons of the wealthy. There is an atmosphere of music in Italy. People hear it from their birth. It becomes one of the invariable concom-

itants of life. To be without music is not a conceivable idea. The fine arts are indispensable with Italians. They are more needed and more sought than those comforts, which in England are prized as the first requisites for living. The Italians, to borrow the idea of a witty acquaintance, can get on without the necessaries of life ; but the luxuries are absolutely indispensable.

This want of a general capacity to enjoy music or to appreciate it, in England, is, we believe, more than any adventitious difficulty, the reason why they have no national music. It is not enough, that the art should be cultivated by the wealthy ; that the opera should be munificently supported, and that foreign performers should carry away fortunes from the kingdom. We would give more for the chance of a national music in a country where the laborers sing at their toil, or join in chorus as they return from the fields, than in that which devotes millions to the building of opera-houses, and the importation of performers.

The assertion, that England has no music, ought undoubtedly to be qualified. In saying this, we mean, in the first place, that there is no music which, from its peculiar character, we pronounce unhesitatingly to be English. We are never at a loss to distinguish Scottish music, or German, or Italian ; but what are the characteristics of English music ? In this sense, we consider that it does not exist. Again ; there is no class of composers belonging to England, whose works form a distinct musical literature. Half a dozen writers of equal merit with Arne would have created such a literature ; but they are not to be found. Handel we do not rank as an English composer ; were he so, England might indeed boast of her national music. Yet we must acknowledge, that, by adopting Handel's music so completely, the English have done all in their power to make it national. It is remarked in a notice of the Chevalier Neukomm, in the " Musical Magazine," that he learned fully to appreciate Handel's music only in England. We could only wish that a few succeeding composers had showed, or would yet show, that the style of Handel belongs to England peculiarly.

The nearest approach the English have made to a national music is perhaps in the cathedral chants and anthems. Here we think a peculiar and distinctly-marked style may be discerned ; and in this class of compositions are to be found

many honored names. A notice of the "Boston Anthem Book," which appeared in a late number of the "Musical Magazine," gives a highly respectable catalogue of English composers of church music. Some of them lived in the early days of music ; as Richard Fevrant, who flourished in the former portion of the reign of Elizabeth, and William Bird, who was born about the year 1543, and whose famous canon, *Non nobis, Domine*, has been ascribed to Palestrina, the father of modern melody.

In speaking of the national music of England, it seems only just to cite a remark of the Earl of Mount Edgcombe, which appears in the "Musical Magazine." He says ;

"There is another species of composition more peculiarly our own, and which I should call our only national music ; I mean *glees*, which differ from any thing I ever heard, and in their style cannot be excelled. Their harmony is so full, rich, and melodious, when executed, as they long were, by the Messrs. Knyvett, and the other performers accustomed to sing them together, that they completely gratify the ear ; and he must be indeed fastidious, or greatly prejudiced, who cannot receive pleasure from their performance. — If the leading voice permits itself to wander from the strict melody of the air, in order to show grace or agility, as is too frequently the case when singers accustomed to other styles are called in, the effect is injured instead of improved, as the great beauty of those compositions is derived from the complete union and equality of all the voices, none preponderating, and from the simplicity of their execution. They then produce the effect of full chords struck on a finely-toned organ."

Our conclusions are, then, that the English as a nation are less gifted with a sense of art than many other nations, and that this deficiency, connected with various adverse circumstances to be traced in the history and condition of the country, accounts for the want of a national music. At the same time we are of opinion, that, but for these adverse circumstances, English music would have at this time been in existence.

We have gone into a somewhat prolix discussion of the subject, from the connexion it has with the prospects of the art in this country. If England has little music of her own, still less has America. We are the heirs of England ; if she had possessed a musical literature, it would have been equally our own. If her traditionary songs had been handed

down from the days of Boadicea and Caractacus, they would now be heard along the Rocky Mountains. The same external causes which have crushed the growth of music in England, prevent our having any. And certainly, as far as we are the descendants of English ancestors, it is reasonable to suppose, that we are wanting in the faculties for comprehending and enjoying art, just as much as our relatives.

We come, then, to the interesting question with which we commenced ; What are the prospects for the growth of a national music in America ? Some of the considerations which have already been presented will help us to give an answer to this question. It is obvious, that the kind of music which we have termed *traditionary*, the rude, but strongly-marked airs of a romantic state of life, or the outpouring of universal enthusiasm, will never be known in America, unless some great and unforeseen causes of excitement should arise. We have received nothing of this kind from England, and we shall bequeath nothing to our posterity ; unless a future age shall be polite enough to dignify the great national airs of *Yankee Doodle* and *Hail Columbia* with the title of traditionary music. The art, if it is ever to exist among us, must be of spontaneous growth.

Neither are our institutions better fitted to foster the art than those of England. The influence of any church upon the fine arts is less felt here than in the mother country. There is no rich and powerful institution of any kind to take the arts under its patronage. As the same time, we do not enjoy the same opportunity in this country of hearing fine music as in England. The Italian opera, the cathedral choirs, the musical festivals, show the English what good music is, if they do not firmly transplant it in that country. In our plain republic these advantages cannot be enjoyed.

The habits of our countrymen seem, if possible, even less suitable to favor the developement of art, than those of the English. All classes are here devoted to business ; all are engaged in some active occupation, of a plain, practical character. There is no wealthy class devoted to enjoyment, none to whom the care of the national taste seems peculiarly recommended.

The obstacles to the formation of a musical literature in America are indeed formidable. But we do not consider the case entirely hopeless. There are several considerations,

which lead us to believe, that the art may at no very remote period be found to flourish among us.

In the first place, if climate and scenery have any effect upon national character, this effect must be felt in America. Are the senses quickened by a burning sun, and the passionate beauty of a tropical climate? Ours is the land of the cypress and myrtle ;

“ of the cedar and vine,  
Where the flowers ever blossom, the beams ever shine.”

Are the faculties keenest in the region of perpetual sunshine and temperate mildness? Such too is America. Do the glories of a northern climate impart a portion of their arctic splendor to the mind? We are sheltered beneath the crystal shield of winter. All the varieties of climate and scenery which are found in Europe, from the shores of the Bosphorus to the Orkney Islands, are comprehended within the boundaries of these United States. Certainly, if climate could create music, our hills and valleys would be vocal with song.

Now the effect of this vast variety of climate, though it can never call forth music, will be powerfully felt hereafter, should the art ever be made to flourish among us. American music, if it ever exists in the true sense of the word, must be as varied, as copious, and as comprehensive, as the character of a people growing up under such widely differing influences.

We, as a nation, are marked by some peculiarities, which may, in the end, prove favorable to the growth of music among us. One of these is, the democratic spirit of the country. It may seem a strange assertion, that an art, which has ever been reared and fostered by wealth and aristocracy, can find a genial soil in this republic. Music, it will be said, is peculiarly at war with the spirit of democracy. There is not a more absolute monarch on the earth than the leader of an orchestra. The moment his divine right is disputed, the empire falls to destruction. For musicians, in the practice of their art, there can be none but an absolute autocracy, a pure despotism. And besides this, music is an expensive art. It is supported by princes. It depends upon the civil list. The aristocratic opera, the wealthy church, are the soil in which it best flourishes.

To this we answer, that music, to become national, must

be received by the people at large. The opera, which is open for the wealthiest classes alone, which has no influence beyond its own walls, or the saloons of the aristocracy, is a mere hot-house plant. It belongs in no way to the nation ; and seldom or never will national performers be found on its boards, or national airs be heard within its precincts. A national opera must be only foremost in a long train of musical performances. The music must be echoed not merely within the walls of other theatres and the dainty drawing-room, but in the cottage of the laborer, in the workshop of the artist, in the market-place, in the streets, in the fore-castle. And, more than this, the opera must not attempt or expect to be the creator of national music. It may lead, correct, and improve the public taste, but it can never create it. On the contrary, the opera must be the result of a national music already existing, and rising to the higher walks of the art.

No opera, we are certain, is supported more richly than that of London. The first performers in the world appear on its boards, and their harvest is gold. Great artists, the Pastas, the Malibrans, the Grisis, the Lablaches, the Paganinis, carry away fortunes from England ; and yet all this does nothing towards cultivating a national music there. There is more hope, far more hope, that a national music will grow out of the rude but fervent hymns, with which the overflowing congregations of Wesleyan Methodists rend the heavens, than that it will ever be reared by the opera, or the costly concerts of the nobility.

In America, music must be in a considerable degree popular. That is, it must be addressed essentially to the people. There is no wealthy class, distinctly preserved, of sufficient numbers to support the opera. The attempt was made, where alone it could succeed, if anywhere, in New York ; and there it failed. A favorite singer may occasionally come upon the American boards, and be received with enthusiasm ; but experience has fully proved, that the Italian opera cannot be supported in this country. There is no church establishment which would undertake the task of forming a national music, or which for any length of time would support any musical system. Music in America must be surrendered to the people, must be domiciled among them, must grow up among them, or it cannot exist at all.

The inference from this is, not that we are never to hear



good music in America, nor that a vulgar and depraved taste is to be for ever gratified, but that the efforts of the lovers of the art must be directed to elevating the taste of the people at large. They must not seek so much to please the few, as to instruct and refine the many. Music must be made popular, not by debasing the art, but by elevating the people. Once excite a general love of the art in all classes, and the standard of music will rapidly rise. In no art is taste more rapidly progressive.

Another effect of our levelling principles upon music is, that the majority of the performers must be native. An Italian company cannot be maintained here ; nor can choirs of foreign singers be kept for our churches. At the most, our leaders and instructors alone can be imported ; most of the music of the country must be committed to American performers. The consequence, we allow, is, that there is an immense amount of very bad amateur music. Not a country village but has its choir of singers from the people. Music of some sort is everywhere. But let us reflect upon the importance of this fact, that music *is* everywhere ; no matter how bad, if there be but a commencement, we may hope for improvement. It is a beautiful principle in our nature, that our conception is far beyond our execution. The choir of singers, who can perform in a tolerable manner the tune of *Old Hundred*, and the congregation which can enjoy the performance, are fitted to estimate a high order of music. A country where the mass of people have a real relish for music of any kind, no matter how indifferent, is in a fair way to have a national music of no mean character.

We do not undertake to assert, that we should not have better music than we now enjoy, if the Italian opera were established in some of our cities. Perhaps even centuries must pass away, before we can listen to such music as is yearly performed at the King's opera in London. But we wish to impress upon our readers the truth, that, if such an opera were supported among us, it would do nothing to promote our national music. Could the whole of that wonderful company who enchant the cities of Europe with their strains, Lablache and the Grisi, Rubini and Tamburini, and all the others that end in *ini*, be induced to make their abode in New York or Philadelphia, the cause of the art would gain little in America by their presence. Their music would be for the wealthy few ;

not only beyond the means of a large majority of our citizens, but also beyond their taste, and altogether unsuitable to do any thing towards elevating their taste. Between such music as that and the mass of people, there must be a complete non-intercourse.

More than this, the establishment of such an opera would do harm to the cause of music among us. The efforts of the wealthy would be exhausted in its support. The taste of one class would be gratified to the entire exclusion of the many from any such enjoyment. Native performers would be depressed ; native music derided. The travelling Chinese, when first introduced into a ball-room, inquired with great wonder, why all these gentlemen and ladies took the trouble to dance themselves ? why did they not hire dancers ? With similar notions about music, namely, that it is better to hire foreign performers exclusively, we are about as likely to have a national music, as the Chinese to dance.

The establishment of the Academy of Music in Boston will do more to advance the art among us in ten years, than the New York Opera could have effected in ten centuries. The Academy offers instruction on terms which need not repel the poorest citizens ; at the same time, it is able to give concerts which shall be cheap enough for any to attend. We have felt, when we have seen the Odeon crowded at these concerts, and have listened to the truly magnificent performances of native musicians, collected or reared by the Academy, that the art was indeed prospering among us.

And what are the pieces which week after week draw two thousand of our fellow citizens at a time to the Odeon ? Certainly not of a low order of music, but selected from the highest productions of the art ; the compositions of Haydn, of Mozart, of Neukomm, of Romberg, and other great masters. We will venture to say, that the Oratorio of the "Creation" is as well known and as popular in Boston as in Vienna. The efforts of the Academy are calculated in the best possible manner to prepare the way for national music among us. Its object is to render music popular ; to plant the art among the people ; to make it a universal resource for elegant enjoyment. To promote this object nothing could be better adapted than the measure taken by the city of Boston of introducing music as part of the regular course of instruction in the public schools ; a measure for which we have in

no small degree to thank the active and intelligent professors and directors of the Academy of Music.

It is commonly asserted, and we incline to think correctly, that there is less of good music in Boston than in the southern cities. In its churches and drawing-rooms we hear less remarkable performances than in New York and Philadelphia. The young ladies do not play and sing so well, as their sisters further south. Few hereabouts can sing Italian airs in such a manner as to be recognised, even could the composer himself hear them ; and drawing-room music consists pretty much of the defunct remains of operas which have been murdered to make *contre-danses* of, or the hum-drum English songs brought out by the last popular concert-giver. But when we turn from such forlorn music as this to the grand concerts of the Academy, or the Handel and Haydn Society, and witness the crowds from all classes who flock to hear them, we feel assured, that music is established on a firm basis in Boston, and that it will be sure to prosper if the principles we have been suggesting are adhered to.

In speaking of the means of promoting the cause of music in this country, we must not omit noticing an excellent periodical to which we have had occasion already to refer ; the "Musical Magazine," edited by Messrs. Hack and Hayward. The work is issued twice a month, in the octavo form. The subjects as announced in the prospectus to be discussed, are the Theory of Music ; Instrumental and Vocal Music ; the History of the Art and of Musical Instruments ; Biographical Notices of Composers ; Criticisms on Musical Compositions and Performances, &c. The Magazine has now reached the sixteenth number, and has thus far been extremely well sustained. It is not so professional as to be unintelligible to those who are not musicians, and at the same time it may be read with pleasure and profit by those who are. One great merit of the Magazine is, that the contents are made interesting. They open to the reader a little world by itself. In the biographies and anecdotes of musical composers and performers, and in the history of the art, we seem to be looking upon a life apart from the cares of the busy world about us ; a life whose paths are green, and whose bowers are pleasant. We earnestly hope that this excellent little periodical will be supported and encouraged. Its price is so low, that it need

not repel any one, and we are sure that those who take it will never regret placing their names on the list of subscribers.

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ART. II. — 1. *A Report on Explosions, and the Causes of Explosions, with Suggestions for their Prevention ; prepared at the Request of the Citizens of Cincinnati.* Cincinnati. 1838. 8vo. pp. 76.

2. *Letter from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, in Obedience to a Resolution of the House, of the 29th of June last, Information in Relation to Steam-Engines, &c.* December 13th, 1838. 8vo. pp. 472.

THE Steamboat, during the last twenty years, has been the means of peopling the West with millions of enterprising and prosperous citizens. It has built up large and wealthy cities, and placed within their reach all the means of comfort, all the elegances of refinement, and every blessing, social, religious, and literary, enjoyed by the inhabitants of the seaboard. It has borne to every foreign region the surplus of those productions, with which the teeming earth has rewarded the Western cultivators. In fact, it has been just as essential to the growth of the nations, that are now expanding themselves in all the vigor of healthy, thriving youth over the prairies and forests, as the rich soil, whose products must otherwise have lain useless on their hands. And it has enabled the whole West to anticipate, by centuries, the tardy growth which seemed to be in prospect for it, when a toilsome voyage of months was necessary to bring up, against the strong current of the Mississippi, a very slender portion of the necessities and comforts, produced in older and more civilized countries.

Such magnificent results could not reasonably be expected, without some accompanying evils. The cup of good has never yet been administered unmixed to human lips ; and the amount of property that has been destroyed, the hundreds and thousands of human beings, that have been ingulfed by the turbid stream, the aching hearts of surviving